

# JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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## VISITATION EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

Nearly three hundred persons attended an institute on visitation or "volunteer" evangelism at the Amagi Sanso at Yugashima in Izu August 14-16, sponsored by the Visitation Evangelism Committee of the N.C.C. Among the speakers was Miss Yoshiko Saito (27) who has been instrumental in bringing eighty people, thirty-two of whom were baptized, into the church since 1950. At twenty she injured her nerves in an auto accident and for a long time found it difficult to work. At the age of twenty-four, while she was interested in the Communist Party, she heard the Reverend Jacob De Shazer speak at Reinanzaka Church and was baptized in May 1950. Soon after that she became an ardent volunteer evangelist.

For three days the conference delegates, numbering more than 300, discussed their methods, successes and common problems. They were divided into eight smaller groups for the purpose of a more intimate sharing of methods and procedures. The first day featured a two hour reunion of the more experienced Volunteers, while a simultaneous lecture meeting in charge of Rev. Yoshida, leader of the movement, was held for all new volunteers. At the time of the first evening session six pastors from Hokkaido, Kyushu, Osaka, Tokyo and Chiba gave addresses, explaining how they began this program and are successfully carrying on in their local churches. On the second day eleven Volunteers from as many churches gave individual testimonies as to their experiences as Lay Visitation Evangelism Volunteers. These eleven came from all areas of Japan. A full half-day was devoted to the weekly time-budget plan, used by most Volunteers, was strongly recommended.

Ken Kawan





Eight Volunteers exhibited their time-budget plan - a systematic budgeting of the 24 hours of each day-setting aside a definite time for visiting. There was also time given to brief reports from many churches throughout the country concerning the success of this program and also the chief problems which they face. The eight groups met for a discussion of their problems. The findings of these small groups were presented to the entire conference which closed with a service of prayer and consecration.

DR. EARNEST A. GROSS AT N.C.C.

Dr. Earnest A. Gross, Chairman of the Department of the International Affairs of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America, addressed a conference of forty Christian leaders at the Ginza Christian Center on August 24. After giving his observations on the situation in Germany, North Africa, Pakistan, India, Vietnam and Korea, he told of a young German who had spoken of the divided individual which is created by a divided nation. Dr. Gross stressed the tragic problem which each person in these areas faces as he considers the price which must be paid for unity. Japan, he said, is not the only country that is divided. When the population problem was raised, Dr. Gross spoke with feeling of the injustice of the present US immigration policy, but he added, after referring to the millions of refugees who live in hovels in many areas of Europe and Asia, that emigration was not the solution of the population problem.

Although in preparation for this meeting, a committee of the Council had been considering the Okinawa Land Problem for some weeks, no report was made. But the question was raised by those present from two angles. One was that of sovereignty and the return of the Ryukyu Islands to Japan. The other concerned the human aspect of the problem. Regarding the first question, Dr. Gross spoke unequivocally in favor of returning the islands to Japan, the day-the hour- the Japanese government asks for their return. Although admitting that there were some who do not share this position, he said, "The American people agree that we should not hold an inch of land against the wish of the Japanese people. In regard to the human aspect of the matter, Dr. Gross said, "I have always found that people of commonsense, if they have the facts, will come to some agreement. If American Christians haven't done anything, it is because of ignorance, not bad faith. If you will supply the facts, I will assure you that they will be distributed and will be read by millions, if there is any report supported by facts."

ODATE CITY CWS RELIEF

A fire in Odate City, Akita Prefecture, which burned down 730 houses and damaged 379 other buildings, at a loss of some 35,000 million yen, also destroyed the Saint Paul's Episcopal Church. Church World Service sent fifty blankets, two bales of





toweling, ten cases of milk (1,620 pounds), ten cases of butter (2,160 pounds) and ten bags of beans (1,000 pounds). With the Hirotsuki Shoten Church as a headquarters, the Episcopal Mission and friends of the church are raising relief and reconstruction funds. Subsequently Church World Service sent additional relief supplies to the stricken city.

#### AUGUST 15TH - MODERATOR MUTO

"The remembrance of August 15th will always remain. Today we are confronted with many problems such as juvenile crimes, the prevalence of newly risen religions, and the renewed strength of conservative forces. We should be conscious that our neglect is the cause of such problems. We desire that the church may become the basis of society and the foundation of the nation. International questions such as the Okinawa Land Problem do not concern only one or two countries. They are problems for all mankind. They are the result of human sin. The churches of the world should unite to solve such problems. They are not theological in themselves. But, because they concern human sin, they concern theology and constitute problems for the church. We must consider the evangelism of Japan from the standpoint of the ecumenical church.

#### DORMITORY MATRONS CONFERENCE

Forty-four dormitory matrons representing twenty-five Christian schools throughout Japan held a conference at Tohoku Gakuin University and Miyagi Gakuin Women's University August 21-24, under the auspices of the Education Committee of the Council of Cooperation. Among those present was Miss Hatsuko Matsuyama (63) who has been a matron at the Heian Girls School and Kobe Women's College (Kobe Jo Gakuin) for a total of thirty-eight years.

#### BAPTIST CONVENTION MEETS

Two hundred and sixty delegates from churches all over Japan attended the Annual Conference of the Japan Baptist Convention at Anagi Sanso July 30 to August 3. Important decisions reported were: to extend an invitation to USSR Baptists to visit Japan; to establish eight new pioneer evangelism stations; to remodel a bus as a Mobile Baptist Center for evangelistic activities; to purchase land for Christian graveyards in five or six places; and to purchase land at Shari, Okinawa. The eight new evangelistic centers are to be at Tomakomai, Kushiro, Muroran, Yamagata, Fukushima, Utsunomiya, Wakayama and Hitoyoshi. The officers for the year are: President-The Reverend K. Yuya of Tokyo, Vice President-The Reverend Okazaki of Shimonoseki, Secretary-The Reverend Mr. Koshi of Kobe, and General Secretary, The Reverend Mr. Higashi. Statistics for the church are as follows: Membership - 1,055 (Increased 1,055), Active membership - 5,694 (Increased 120), churches - 62 (Increased 5), Preaching Places 6 (Increased 2), Baptized during year - 1,366 (Increased 56), Sunday Worship Average attendance 4,597 (Increased 837), Offering - ¥29,700,000 (Increased ¥6,690,000)





### OKINAWA LAND PROBLEM

The Christians of Okinawa recently addressed a communication to "Christian Friends in America" urging them to consider seriously the Okinawa Land Problem. According to letter there has been criticism of Christianity in connection with this problem. Some people are reported to have left the church because they say, if a Christian country such as America does this to us, then we don't need Christianity.

### AVACO SUMMER ACTIVITIES

The 7th All-Japan Summer Church Audio-Visual Education Workshop was held at Kutsukake from July 26 to 30. This year there were about 600 people, including ministers, church workers, kindergartners and missionaries, in attendance. In addition 50 lecturers and Avaco staff members were present. Nearly 10 percent of the attendants were non-NCC members, including Catholics.

This workshop has grown annually until this year approximately 100 applicants had to be refused because of lack of accommodations. This is all the more surprising, since Avaco does not help to defray the expenses of those who attend. The period was divided into two separate sessions of two and a half days each, but most of the attendants stayed for the entire period. It is clear from the increased attendance and the many expressions of appreciation that this program is extremely successful. One of the greatest accomplishments of this workshop, in addition to education in audio-visual methods, was the encouragement which the attendants received from meeting so many people from all over Japan, from Hokkaido to Kyushu. Other meetings at which Avaco gave instructions include one held by the NCC for Kwansai Church School workers at Kwansei Gakuin, August 1-3; the Lutheran Church School Teachers School at Karuizawa, August 2-4; the Kanto District school for church school and kindergarten teachers, August 16; the Niigata Church School Teachers Training course, August 13-15; the Kyushu District Audio-Visual Aids Workshop, August 25-28. At each of these meetings there were 100 or more in attendance. In addition Avaco sent two representatives to the Radio and Television Conference held by the International Christian University for university professors in two sessions, July 23-28 and July 30-August 4. Demands for services have been so numerous that Avaco has been unable to answer all the requests. It is planned to extend this program into the northern sections of Japan in the autumn.

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Mr. Masayoshi Kato, a Bible Colporteur and evangelist is also something of a botanist. His hobby at present is collecting seeds for a Biblical Botanical Garden. There are about one hundred sixty plants mentioned in the Bible. Mr. Kato has gathered sixteen of these already.





A "Mission Seminar" under auspices of the United Church of Christ in Japan was held at Sankaiso in Numazu August 27-31. In addition to committee members fifty-four representatives of the fourteen districts in Japan were present.

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"The Pillar of Fire", a drama based on a story written by a Christian Socialist, Naoto Kinoshita, will be produced at the Hitotsubashi Lecture Hall, December 1-15.

A LETTER OF GREETING FROM SECRETARY HIRAI

To my Christian Friends:

On August 27th I returned from my two-month trip during which I visited the U.S.A., West Germany, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden. The journey was so very worthwhile that I wish to express my gratitude to all who made it possible. I shall never forget the cordial hospitality shown to me. Christian fellowship is a blessing which overrides national and racial boundaries and even transcends linguistic handicaps. Among Christians there is a strong bond of union. "Our commonwealth is in heaven." Geographically separated as we are, we are brothers in the Lord.

During the journey I talked about the 1958 World Sunday School Convention. It will be an historic event for Protestant Christianity in Japan. May everyone remember it in their prayers and may many be able to attend. The missionary enterprise is an integral function of the church. But the Great Commission is not always taken seriously. In Oslo I attended the meeting of the Commission of the World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation. This was the primary object of my trip. Not only members of the Commission but representatives from Africa, Asia and Europe were there. The problems of missions were discussed so sincerely that I could not help asking myself whether or not the younger churches are coming up to the expectation of the older churches. What about the situation in Japan which is about to celebrate the Centenary of Protestant Christianity? The younger churches must not stay young forever. A great responsibility rests upon the churches in Japan.

Kiyoshi Hirai

